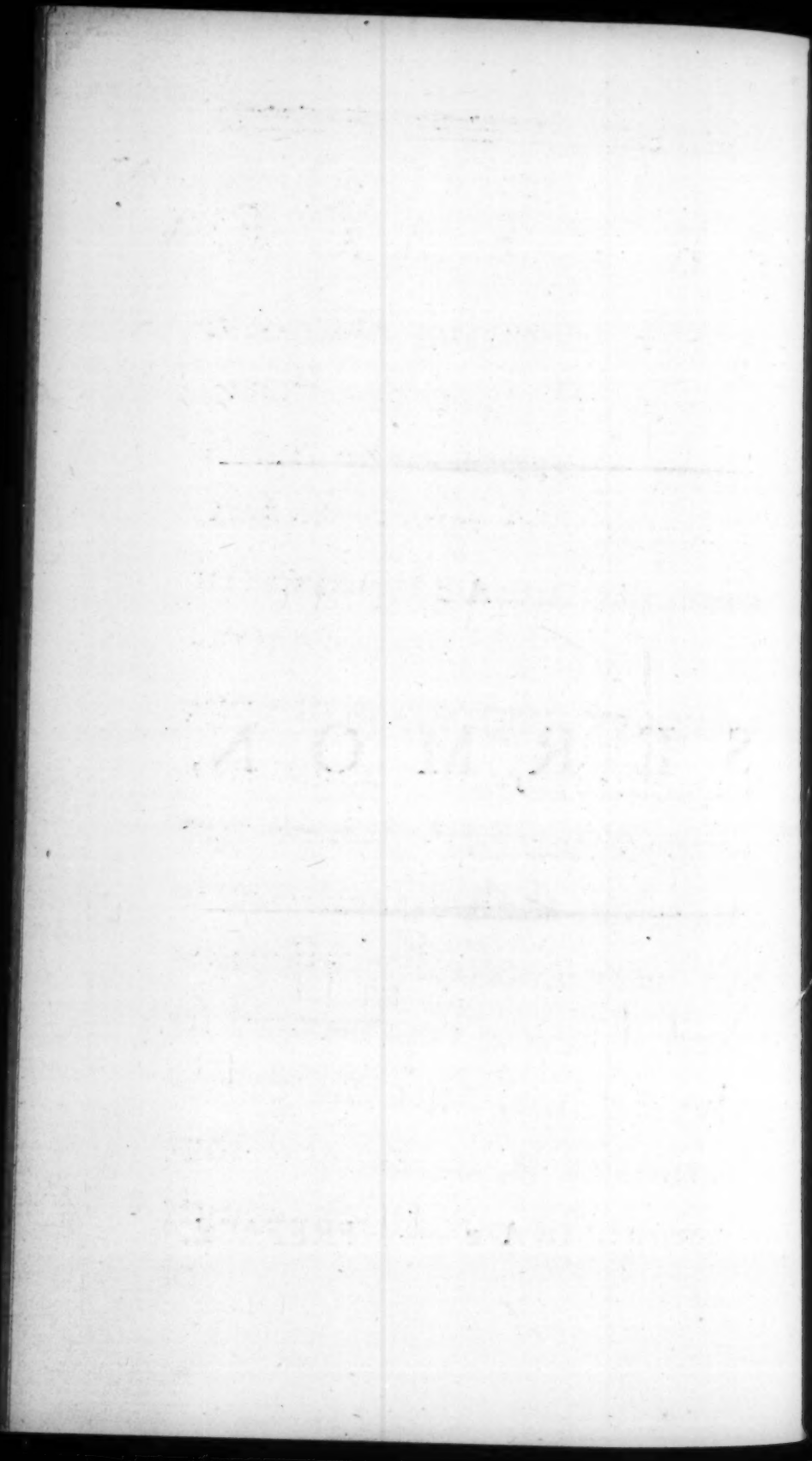

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S E R M O N.

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PREFACE.



P R E F A C E.

THE following Discourse was delivered in a Place, where unhappily the Spirit of *heaping to themselves teachers*, prevailed among numbers of its community, to an extraordinary degree: and consequently, by the ignorance of those teachers, where the doctrines therein controverted were copiously disseminated. It was represented to the Author, that the publication of it, to the end that it might be put into the hands of
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vi P R E F A C E.

of those, who denied him the power of addressing them from his pulpit, might be attended with a salutary effect. If therefore, this, his first venture into publick, should chance to stray beyond his own secluded community; be this his apology. What comes from the pulpit (as far at least as Doctrine is concerned) should be fit to stand a publick examination: the subject will secure the Author from the imputation of an attempt at literary fame; for, unhappily,
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P R E F A C E. vii

he must speak on this topic chiefly to the lower classes.

The Author is conscious, that in the following pages he offers nothing new. The controverted points have existed since the first age of the Gospel; and such are the weapons with which they have been repeatedly foiled. If he has placed, in one clear and compact form, what must otherwise have been collected from larger Works, and consequently beyond the reach of the illiterate,

viii P R E F A C E.

literate, his end is answered. Those, who would wish for further and more copious views of the subject, he refers to the great source of his own information:---Bishop *Bull's* HARMONIA APOSTOLICA.

R O M A N S

ROMANS iii.—28.

THEREFORE WE CONCLUDE THAT A
MAN IS JUSTIFIED BY FAITH WITH-
OUT THE DEEDS OF THE LAW.

JAMES ii.—24.

YE SEE THEN, HOW THAT BY WORKS
A MAN IS JUSTIFIED, AND NOT BY
FAITH ONLY.

THE words, which I have here
brought together, contain the fe-
perate deductions from a most impor-
tant argument;—in which, our two
Apostles discuss the Principle, and lay
down the Rule for the attainment of
Salvation. Under a partial Observa-
tion, nothing can appear to assert doc-
trines more immediately at variance
with each other: still, on this Rock we

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profess

profess to build our hopes of Salvation; and allow the necessity of regulating our conduct on the precepts of these great Masters in sacred Wisdom. As to Authority, neither dare we prefer or impeach either; each having the sanction of a Divine Commission; each speaking under the law of Inspiration. How then may we proceed? Shall we build our Hopes on *Faith* alone?—But St. James tells us, that *as the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also*—*. Shall our Works then save us?—Our Lord himself has declared, that *when we have done all those Things, which are commanded us, still we are but unprofitable Servants*†.

To that class of Christians, who are actuated by the sincere desire of living in strict conformity to the Laws of God, (denied however, the power of having free access to the obscurer
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* James ii.—26. † Luke xvii.—10.

Parts of Gospel revelation) these apparent contrarities can but afford much perplexity and uneasiness. I shall therefore make it the business of the following discourse to reconcile this Apostolical reasoning; and thence I would infer what is the genuine Gospel doctrine: for we may rest fully satisfied that one alone can be maintained.

To prepare the way for this undertaking, I could premise the necessity of bringing forward one of our Apostles to illustrate the full meaning of the other. The spirit of each must be the same; since the holy guide, of which each so eminently partook, cannot prove the source of disunion. In words, however, they apparently differ: one therefore must stand forward as an interpreter.

Now, from several weighty considerations, it will appear reasonable, that St. James should fill this office towards

St. Paul. Most reasonable that it should be so, when we recollect that St. Paul wrote, comparatively, in an early age of the church; St. James in one somewhat more remote*: — that the one speaks what may be warped to a dubious sense; the other, what can be annexed to one alone:—in short, that St. James wrote purposely to combat certain heresies, which had thus early introduced themselves into the Church of Christ, from a false interpretation of St. Paul's doctrine. That such perversions had prevailed (besides the general language of antiquity) St. Paul himself bears testimony; when he complains, that they *slanderosly reported him to say, Let us do evil that good may come*†.— And indeed it is an opinion, which has the sanction of antient and great authority, that not only this Epistle by St. James, but those also which bear the titles of the second of St. Peter, the first

* St. Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans about the year 57, St. James about A. D. 60.

† Romans iii.—8.

first of St. John, and that also by St. Jude, were chiefly levelled against those early heretics, who from St. Paul had falsely wrested, among other delusions, the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, independent of Works. And, in conformity to this, we read in the second Epistle of St. Peter, that in St. Paul's Epistles *are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction**. How just, though melancholy a portrait of what prevails even in our own days!

From these circumstances, therefore, I would urge the propriety of making use of St. James, to illustrate the true meaning of St. Paul: to which I may likewise add, as somewhat of internal evidence, that such was the immediate drift of the Apostle himself; that he actually makes use of the same argument in the example of Abraham, to prove
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* 2 Peter iii.—16.

the necessity of good works unto Justification, which St. Paul had previously used to impress the efficacy of Faith.

Having offered thus much in support of this proceeding, I shall content myself for the present, with the bare assertion, that St. Paul utters the same Doctrine precisely, which St. James (consistent with his office of an interpreter) has expressed in terms more explicit:—that *by works a man is justified, and not by faith only**. And that it may not be objected, that either sense is hereby distorted to an arbitrary meaning, I shall proceed to establish it by collateral proofs, even from the Epistles of St. Paul himself.

I observed, that the meaning of St. James was open but to one;—the obvious construction: the words of the other Apostle doubtless involve some ambiguity.

* James ii.—24.

ambiguity. I shall therefore clear the way for a reconciliation of their sentiments, by an explanation of the several terms which they contain: *viz.*

1. JUSTIFICATION.

2. FAITH. And

3. WORKS.

Hence, every difficulty will vanish; for we may be certain, that the apparent difference in the Apostolical reasoning must consist in words only.

1. I need not enter on a minute investigation of the first term; inasmuch as all the needful will result from an enquiry into the nature of the other two, unto which Justification is said to be annexed. It will only therefore be necessary to ascertain the most obvious and accurate meaning of the term.—And here I would guard against an error, which Enthusiasts are but too prone to indulge; even the supposition
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that it implies an *absolute spotless nature* in consequence of their faith:—a state free from the dominion of sin:—that state, which they fondly represent to themselves under the delusive term of *the new birth*; and by which they satisfy themselves of their own especial *Election*. Now the original term, when carefully examined by the context, will appear simply to imply that act in judicial proceedings, whereby the person at the Bar is (not acquitted) but exempt from the consequence of Judgement.—Wherefore it is manifest, that the *Justification* promulged by the Gospel, is to be considered only as the free and merciful act of our great Judge, whereby he delivers his faithful servants from the guilt and consequent punishment due to their offences; on terms perfective of human nature, and suitable to his own purity and holiness.

Still there is a distinction, which some have ventured on (although it must be considered

considered only as a vague inference) of a two-fold Justification. By which is meant, that in this Life a man by his Faith is so far justified, as to be arranged under that banner of Christ, where he may be aided to persevere in the accumulation of that treasure which may prove his security in the day of final retribution. To the principle, doubtless, we cannot object: this aid, vouchsafed to the faithful, is certainly deducible from Scripture; and is full of consolation: but, we must consider the term of *Justification* annexed thereto, as grossly misapplied; and beyond the misapplication, calculated only to feed a controversy, in which we derive no aid or authority from Scripture. However, by the advocates for this Doctrine, it is allowed, that a man may fall off from the first:—*Justification* therefore, according to the proper import of the term, must necessarily be confined to the last determination of our fate. I pass on therefore,

to the Second, and more important point, to determine the Apostolical meaning of the word FAITH.

2. And be it observed, that the *Faith*, unto which St. Paul annexes *Justification*, is by no means to be understood (if I may so express myself) as *a single virtue*;—but even as *the entire condition of the Evangelical Covenant*: or, in other words, that which collects in its train, all the deeds of Christian piety. That it is, which engages us first to believe in God;—from an assurance of his goodness, to trust in him;—from a contemplation of *the love which he hath bestowed on us* *, to *serve him*; in the *hope of SEEING HIM AS HE IS* †;—to *purify ourselves, even as he is pure* ‡;—and lastly, from a conviction of the extensive merits and universal efficacy of that mysterious sacrifice, the great end and accomplishment of the Law; to implore, in our own behalf, the intercession

* 1 John iii—1. † 1 John iii—2. ‡ 1 John iii—3.

cèssion of our Redeemer:—that our own imperfect measure may be supplied from the abundance of his Grace. So that Faith will, of necessity, involve Hope, Charity, and every deed of Piety and Virtue. And, to this effect, is the reasoning of St. Paul himself. To the Galatians he observes, that *in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but Faith, which worketh by love* *. And again, as it were summing up the argument of his Epistle;—*for in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature* †.—And to the Corinthians he declares,—*Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the Commandments of God* ‡. Can we read and still retain a doubt as to what St. Paul means by *Faith*? Must we not necessarily infer, that the *Faith* which he preached, as productive of *Justification*, was none other than that, which

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became

* Gal. v.—6. † Gal. vi.—15. ‡ 1 Cor. vii.—19.

became valid through Charity;—that, which pointed out its fruits in the new Creature;—that which conformed its practice to the Laws of God?

But this is still further manifest, when we turn to those passages of the same Apostle, wherein, treating of Faith alone, unconnected with practical duties, he seems to represent it as of no validity. *Though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not Charity, I am nothing* *. Yet this is the same Apostle, who in the words of the text, places Faith in the highest scale of Christian requisites. Again, in the conclusion of his argument, he speaks more decisively:—*And now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity, these three;— but the greatest of these is Charity* †. What shall we hence infer? What can we, but that St. Paul uniformly considers a *justifying Faith* as replete with active virtues:—the most eminent of which,
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* 1 Cor. xiii.—2.

† 1 Cor. xiii.—13.

is Charity; as the accomplishment of every duty towards our fellow creatures, and towards God himself our universal Parent:—and that he in truth spake the same individual sentiment with St James, that *as the body without the spirit is dead, so Faith without Works, is dead also**?

Nor is it less clear, that *obedience to the Law* is by St. Paul, necessarily involved in the idea of *Faith*: since he very emphatically declares, that a compliance with the precepts of God, are necessary to ensure that *Justification*, which he attributes elsewhere to *Faith*. *For not the hearers of the Law are just before God, but the doers of the Law shall be justified*†. And again, *Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness*‡. From these, and numerous other passages of a similar tendency, which the attentive reader

* James ii—26. † Romans ii—13. ‡ Rom. vi—16

reader may sufficiently collect, we are led to affirm, that when the Apostle attributes *Justification* to *Faith*; although *Faith* alone is expressed, still that he implies all those concomitants, which in other passages he involves under the general idea of *Faith*. And can we do otherwise; the Apostle himself having testified, that without Charity—Faith is nothing worth;—that unto Obedience of the Law, Justification is annexed:—still attributing elsewhere all the needful unto Faith?—Can we, I say, do otherwise than conclude, that Faith of necessity involves Obedience, and a compliance with all those practical duties, both towards God and Man, which are deducible from the Gospel?

But here a question naturally arises, whether in truth Faith can exist without Charity, and a compliance (as far at least as our nature will permit) with the Law? If we may collect our information from
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the Apostle, it certainly may; for he supposes a strong case;—even that degree of Faith which might enable him to remove mountains:—a species, we may remember, allowed valid by our Saviour*. But still this is not a *justifying faith*. It seems to acknowledge, indeed, the Omnipotence of God; but, with respect to compliance with his will, it may be altogether barren: and in that instance can only be productive of greater damnation. So too, we are not to imagine that the number of self-avowed Christians, who approach with a “*Lord, Lord!*” and boast of their Faith, yet persevere in their iniquity, have made any real advances towards *Justification*. Our Lord himself informs us, in what manner all such will be received:—*I never knew you; depart from me, all ye that work iniquity*†.—The question then will thus resolve itself; and our Authority stands beyond the

* Matt. xvii.—20.

† Matt. 7.—22.

the reach of Cavil, that no Faith whatever can avail us to *Justification*, which is not perfect in the fulfilling of the Law.

We have seen then the nature of *Faith*; let us now consider what the Apostle implies by *Works*.

3. As to the general Evangelical meaning of the term, no illustration can be requisite: all must comprehend it, who are able to distinguish between good and evil. By *good works* then, are meant acts of true holiness, and of sincere Obedience to the Laws of the Gospel. In the present instance, however, we must infer, that St. Paul treats of some *Works* in particular: for it is evident, that he involves all the practical duties, and virtues of Christianity, under his idea of *Faith*. Doubtless, therefore, these Works, which the Apostle pronounces insufficient to the attainment

attainment of Salvation, must be, in some measure, distinct from that, his general idea.

Now, to comprehend the real and full intent of the Apostle, it may be useful to give some attention to his leading object, in this Epistle to the Romans; as well as to the opponents and adverse doctrines, which he therein professedly combats.

We are here to recollect, that, from the first preaching of the Gospel to the Jews, it laboured under this weighty prejudice;—that it struck at the very existence of that dispensation, which had been established by Moses, under the immediate auspices of God; as was evident from the miraculous events without number, whereby it was repeatedly confirmed. From the very beginning, this consideration spread an alarm among the Jews. And we find our

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blest Lord himself, in his ever-memorable Discourse upon the Mount, urging, as it were, a reply to this Charge:—*Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill* *. However, in due time, the Law was by this means made perfect and fulfilled. Accordingly, typical ceremonies were abolished, on the establishment of the truth:—the spiritual law being confirmed, the carnal, of course, ceased.

Still the Jews, who had fondly imagined that their law was final, and their dispensation to remain cœval with the world; could little relish what appeared to them a mutilation, if not a total abolition of it. Pharisaical traditions had reduced their religion in many instances, to a mere jumble of idle forms, senseless and superstitious: but to them the more perfect law of Liberty proved the introduction

* Matt. v.—17.

introduction of a severer law. In consequence of these prejudices, many revolted at the simplicity of the new religion: and not a few, who were actually convinced by the miracles of Christ and of his Apostles, which had enlisted under the banners of the new Faith, still could not divest themselves of their awe for the Mosaic rites;—neither could be persuaded to reject the shadow, when they had actually embraced the substance. And hence originated the numerous tribe of Judaizing Christians—a motley species, who by their practice, could scarcely be termed of either persuasion. A similar disposition soon paved the way for internal divisions: neither were there wanting turbulent spirits to fan the flame; and from these small beginnings, to introduce among the first converts, the bitter zeal of controversy and contention. Hence, as we learn from the Acts of the Apostles, some would have imposed a compliance with the rites of the old

Covenant, even on the Gentile converts *. In consequence of this, the Apostolical decree was promulged in favor of the Gentiles. The quiet thence established, was not however of a long continuance: speedily old doctrines were revived, by the subtle enemies of the Gospel; and the Gentiles again laboured under similar perplexities. Among the Churches of Rome and Galatia, this was more immediately the case; and against such dangerous impositions, the great Apostle of the Gentiles chiefly levels his authority. That he might thoroughly eradicate so dangerous a corruption, (already condemned in the Apostolic Synod) he enters on a minute examination of the Mosaic Covenant: treating of its origin, nature and application: and as well in this Epistle to the Romans, as in that to the Galatians, proving by various arguments, that it never was the purpose of God that the Mosaic Law should be

* Acts xv.

be esteemed a Covenant of Salvation ; inasmuch as thereby alone, (independent of its connection with the New) no one ever had, or indeed could attain real Justification. Such is the intention of St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Romans. And under this consideration it will, I should imagine, appear evident, that the works, unto which the Apostle refers, are to be understood as those, which were enjoined by the ceremonial Law. Which is indeed sometimes, more especially in the words of the text, very plainly asserted : wherein he terms them, not simply works——but *the deeds of the Law.*

The result therefore of our examination appears to be this : that St Paul, speaking of the efficacy of Faith, contrasts it with the ritual Law. I need not here enlarge on the incompetency of that Law. It may suffice us to have seen, that when the Apostle speaks of Faith—he implies a demonstration of
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that Faith, by an actual compliance with those precepts, laws and ordinances, which are enjoined us by the Gospel. St. Paul therefore, may be said to infer, that Man is justified by the Gospel, and not by the Law of Moses.

Let us now then, compare the sentiments of each Apostle.

It is evident, that by the *Works* unto which St. James attributes *Justification* (or in other words, that portion of Divine favor which may secure us from the punishment of the Law) is meant, a conformity to the precepts of the New Covenant, in reverence of him who makes it. Similar to this, is St. Paul's idea of *Faith*. *Justification*, therefore, is by each, annexed to the same principle. St. Paul rejects the validity of the deeds of the Law, to ensure Justification; St. James reprobates that delusive species of *Faith*, on which so many depend,

depend, fostering the idea of *self-righteousness*:—that Faith, which St. Paul declares to be as nothing, unaccompanied with Charity—that Faith, which he afterwards asserts, to hold but a subordinate degree of estimation with respect to Charity.

The sum therefore of our argument will rest at this point:—That through the merits of the Sacrifice in the New Covenant, Man may obtain *Justification* by a faithful adherence to the precepts of the Gospel: unto which, he is actuated by a firm belief and reliance on the promises therein contained, and an heart fraught with gratitude for those inestimable benefits. But, on the other hand, that as the ceremonial Law of Moses—that *Law which had but a shadow of good things to come**, was inadequate to the purchase of Salvation; so neither will that barren FAITH, which is not productive of these sure

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* Hebrews x.—i.

tests of its sincerity, be attended by that saving grace, the distinguishing characteristic of the Gospel Dispensation.

Having offered thus much on this most interesting subject, I cannot entirely dismiss it without making a transient application to another doctrine, which stands much connected with it; at least, which is generally espoused by those, who are most zealous for the Doctrines already controverted: the idea, I mean, of their own especial unconditional Election: or, as they would express it, that Christ came into this world to save only a certain predestined number, into which they are themselves conscious of being already elected. To say nothing of the presumption of such a boast, let us only examine the doctrine by that of Justification. We have seen its real nature and dependencies. We have also seen, that although a merciful and gracious
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act of God, of which no man living can be intrinsically worthy;—still, that as well Christ as his Apostles uniformly suppose us capable of attaining it, and accordingly enjoin us universally to attempt it. What then becomes of this fond fancied charm, vouchsafed to those torpid souls, who would sit them down contented, secure in the decree pronounced in their favor—leaving every thing to God? We do not here speak of those chosen vessels, who, consistent with the *fore-knowledge* of God, may have been brought forward to answer the great purposes of revelation: but would strenuously combat that arrogance, which claims an unmerited superiority of affection at the hand of God, in opposition to the plainest precepts of the Gospel.

But I am aware, that a partial examination of the subject will have little weight; inasmuch as the chief advocates for this Doctrine assume points, which

can only be determined from an accurate investigation of words in the original language of the New Testament : for thereon, in truth, the whole controversy would turn. A most weighty reason, this, against giving heed to those teachers, who from ignorance, are themselves debarred the power of drawing true doctrines from the *original* fountain of light : that fountain — whence — and whence alone, any should be drawn. — I have only hinted in what manner the doctrine of Election is connected with that of Justification.

It is by Justification alone that we can obtain admission to the joys of futurity : but as to the *terms* on which it is promised, (which it has been the intent of this discourse to place in the clearest light) our Lord enjoins us universally to secure them for ourselves. Election, therefore, which brings us to the very same end ; and which is only to be understood as the determination
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of our fate—is actually the consequence of Justification—in no sense the cause. We see then, how it stands or falls, with the proper distinction of that term.—What further I would submit on the subject, I shall enforce by an example.

I should imagine, that presumption could hardly ever have taken such entire possession of any one, as to represent their own Election to be more certain, than was that of St. Peter, when called to the Apostleship. But still a further token of the divine preference was vouchsafed him, no less signal than encouraging. On his demonstrating an extraordinary degree of Faith, our Lord rejoins: *Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it**. If in any

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* Matt. xvi.—17, 18.

one instance, Election is publickly to be traced in favor of an individual, it must be in this: inasmuch as it involves not only a promise, but a deliberate prophecy. But still turn to a subsequent period of his history:—turn, and view him *denying the Lord that bought him*—denying him with bitter oaths—adding perjury to infidelity. I enter not on a full investigation of the subject, but would endeavour to rouse the lethargic soul of any asserter of his own Election; by demanding, what he conceives might have been the Apostle's fate, had his indignant Master cut him off under the immediate pressure of his guilt; or had remorse driven him, with the traitor Judas, to hide his shame in a premature death. Faith was, for the moment, suppressed; and the Apostle degenerated. And who art thou, O Man, who boastest that thou canst not fall?—An Apostle fell! But, *He went out, and wept bitterly**!—Go thou too, and with tears expiate

* Luke xxii.—62.

expiate thy presumption! *Repent of this thy wickedness; and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee**.

Keep thy servants, Lord, from presumptuous sins, lest they get the dominion over us: so shall we be undefiled and innocent from the great Offence†.

Thus have I endeavoured to reconcile the apparent contrarieties in the Doctrine of our Apostles, and to expound the proper Evangelical basis of Salvation. And it has been done, I trust, consistent with the spirit of those sacred records, wherein the gracious message has been transmitted for our consolation and encouragement. It were barely possible, either for me to have dwelt on this important subject, or for you, my Brethren, to have given me a candid hearing; without calling to mind the fatal delusion which it occasions, as in old times,

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* Acts viii.—22. † Psalm xix.—13.

So even in our own days to numbers of our succeeding Brethren. Will not the present age but too justly apply to that predicted period, in which it was foretold, that men *would not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts would heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears**? How many, alas! are those, who vainly seek refuge in they know not what;—who build their hopes on a phantom of their own imagination;—who *turn away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables†*!—Our faith, and what is more, our Charity must induce us to lament the delusion: may it also awaken every effort to stem a torrent, at once equally prejudicial to the eternal welfare of individuals, as to the promotion of our social comforts. I can but feel a reluctance to impeach the tendency of any religious opinion: but still I am called on to remind you (and may it have its full impression) what may prove the result of that

* 2 Tim. iv.—3.

† 2 Tim. iv.—5.

that which depresses the efficacy, consequently, in some measure, abrogates the necessity of the social virtues: confining salvation to that faith, of which, even the *Devils* are capable, and at which they tremble.

To those, who are the objects of our lamentation, I am denied the opportunity of addressing my Discourse, since few of them, in all probability, have chanced to stray within these walls.—However, let not the wavering of some, have any influence on our fidelity. If we cannot eradicate the disorder—still, so far we may succeed as to stop the progress of the contagion. We have traced the genuine doctrines of Christianity on this important point: if your minds afford their assent to the fidelity of the discussion, let your lives pass in subserviency thereto. But be ye also stedfast in Faith, without wavering: let your works, your attendance on your
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respective stations, relationships, and duties, assert the validity of your Faith.

Heaven forbid, that the sacred name of Religion, that all-cheering name, which forms a cement more powerful than the ties of blood, should, in these enlightened days be perverted to discord and disunion! Yet the subject will induce me, in the words of the Apostle, to *beseech you to mark them, which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrines which ye have learned, and to avoid them* *. Our Church has fostered in its bosom, the mild spirit of toleration; the brightest Jewel, which can adorn any: it exemplifies that Charity the best voucher for its Faith. Still, although we tolerate others, it becomes a more important duty to adhere, as individuals, firmly and openly to our own. I am the more intent on this subject, having every reason to believe, that the utmost mischief has accrued from its being so little

* Romans xvi.—17.

little heeded. You must be sensible of the great prevalence of example over a large portion of our fellow creatures : perhaps more than half the world are actuated by no better principle. How weighty an inducement then, for us to be cautious in the example which we set :—for, let me add, there are very few of those, who are elevated above the common rank of mankind, but are looked up to as the guides and patterns to the little circles over which they occasionally preside. Neither is the conduct of our race in this instance destitute of reason : the greater advantage we have derived from education and experience, the greater light of principle and morals we may be supposed to contain ; we thus become, at least the planets of our system ; and although we may ourselves shine with borrowed lustre—still, from the reflection of that alone, others are enabled to emit a fainter glow. Suffer me, therefore, to caution such as fill

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these stations in Society, against even inadvertencies of conduct. Give your sanction to what you consider to be the true Faith:—*Mark them, which cause divisions and offences, and avoid them:—be not, as children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine**: but, having proved all things, hold fast that which is good†.

I mean not by these words of admonition, to sow dissensions in a Christian Community; but, would strenuously urge the necessity of withholding even our tacit sanction, by casually making one in the seminaries of disunion. Let it not be your case, to verify the prophetic sarcasm of St. Paul: that *itching ears* should prevail over sound judgment. In a word, give not those, who may be swayed by your example, an opportunity to suppose—that you are wavering in your Faith: or, that you consider your Faith to be a matter of indifference.

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* Eph. iv.—14.

† 1 Thess. v.—21.

Desert not the holy Parent, who has fostered and cherished you from your earliest days ;—who has implanted in you the first fair seeds of virtue ;—who taught you to lisp the precepts of your Maker ;—and, before ye were meet objects for *the sleight of men and cunning craftiness* *, discovered to you the interesting medium of true Religion.—And let not so base a motive as curiosity induce you to forsake her—to assist the progress of an alien : to seek entertainment where your heart denies its assent. Under what Class shall we rank the devotion of such Christians ?

Those who stand in the relationship, whether of Parents, Magistrates, Teachers, or of Masters, may do well to consider, how far their examples may prevail in these instances over their Offspring or Dependants. Let it not be treated as an improbable surmise, if we

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conjecture,

* Luke iv.—14.

conjecture, that whilst the principle gratifies his *itching ears*, the influence of his example may prevail on the Dependant, to gratify a more criminal inclination. And who shall pretend to determine, whether the Offence may not be found in the same dark register with its actuating cause !

Let not these words of caution be misconstrued into a breach of that duty which it is our wish to inculcate. We would establish that *Faith, which worketh by Love**. And that, it must be obvious, will in the first place, seek the glory and honor of that beneficent power, whence every hope and every comfort is deduced ; in *whom we live and move, and have our being*† : who, (as the beloved Apostle of Christ assures us) himself is *Love*‡. And this we still further may promote, by labouring to bring the lost sheep unto the flock of Christ ; that

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* Gal. v.—6, † Acts xvii.—28,

‡ 1 John iv.—16,

we may be one *Fold*, under one *Shepherd**. This we may all accomplish towards individuals, although our Duty requires us to *mark and avoid them* in their aggregate capacity. Here example may prevail: precept will have its due force. And this, let me add, will be the certain demonstration of our own Faith; even to the security of a glorious and permanent reward:—for, as St. James speaks to our encouragement, *If any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;—let him know, that he which converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins*†.

Finally, then, Brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things.—

And

* John x.—16. † James v.—19, 20.

*And those things which ye have both
learned, and received, and heard——do :
and the God of peace shall be with you *.
Amen.*

* Philip. iv.—8, 9.



Advertisement.

THE following Paraphrase was delivered in a Sermon, with a view to illustrate, and to point out in what manner the original may be made the Basis of all our Devotions. It was received in such a manner by a partial Audience, as nearly to persuade the Author that it might contain some little merit: at least, the many applications, which have been made to him, for Copies of it, will justify him in thus presenting it to those, for whose Instruction it was originally compiled.

A
P A R A P H R A S E
O N T H E
L O R D ' s P R A Y E R.

*O*UR Father which art in Heaven,—
our Guide, our Protector, our be-
neficent Parent; who hast created all
things, and for whose pleasure they are,
and are created; in whom we live and
move, and have our being; thou Father
of mercies, and God of all comfort;
who dwellest between the Cherubims,
and whose name is Eternity:—*Hallowed*
be thy name.—As is thy power, might,
majesty and dominion, so let it be ac-
knowledged by thy unworthy servants:
Holy,

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory ; glory be to thee, O Lord most High !—*Thy kingdom come.*—Thou hast graciously revealed thy Law to Man : forward the time, O blessed Lord, when Man shall make that Law the standard of his conduct : when thou shalt be acknowledged as the universal Parent :—when Jews, Turks, Infidels and Heretics shall acknowledge Thee the only God, and Christ, whom thou hast sent. And may *thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*—As thy holy angels always do thee service in heaven, so may we effect the same purposes on earth.—Thou knowest what things we have need of before we ask ; thou knowest also our ignorance in asking. Give us, then, such things as may be consistent with thy purposes : if comforts are in reserve—thanks to thy gracious goodness : if adversity—*thy will be done !* But thou knowest likewise our infirmities, and all our wants ; and of whom may we

G

seek

seek for succour but of thee. *Give us,*
 then, *this day, our daily bread.*—Feed
 us with food convenient for us; give
 us the necessaries of life, as the day may
 require; that we may be enabled to
 devote ourselves entirely to thy service.
 We are conscious of our manifold trans-
 gressions, and that we are altogether
 unworthy so much as to make our sup-
 plications unto thee. But thou art the
 same Lord, whose property is always to
 have mercy. Grant us, O God, thy
 pardon. *Forgive us our trespasses, as*
we forgive them that trespass against us.
 We sue for pardon in their behalf:—
 extend it likewise unto us, who, in this
 hope, are ambitious, by the forgiveness
 of others, to imitate thy mercy at an
 awful distance. Still, as our whole wish
 and ardent desire, is to fulfill thy will
 in all things, grant us a further help:—
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver
us from evil. Thou hast declared, O
 Lord, that we must endure a trial; be
 thou also our guide: suffer us not to be
 tempted

tempted above that we are able to bear;
 and let thy right hand protect us from
 the Arch-Enemy of our race. Save us,
 Lord, or we perish: for, in thy hands
 alone, is vested power; thou only art
 holy, thou only art the Lord: the do-
 minion of the whole world is thine;—
 thou art King from everlasting, and
 world without end. *For thine is the
 kingdom, and the power and the glory,
 for ever and ever.—Hallelujah.—Amen.*

F I N I S.



